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ABSTRACT

Developed as part of the Indiana Least Restrictive Environment Project, this document is concerned with issues relating to the education and community integration of persons with substantial handicaps. The paper traces the development of the movement to provide those special education services necessary to integrate the disabled into the general society. The introductory section identifies such characteristics of the integration initiative as building bridges between school and independent life that include the option of meaningful work. The next sections examine the legal and philosophical basis for integration and the evolution of the concept of least restrictive environment in schools. Shortcomings of the cascade or continuum model are identified. Six "informed judgments" about the future are made and include the following: (1)) curriculum for substantially handicapped students will include community living, working, and social skill development; and (2) public schools will be held accountable for providing a functional education for substantially handicapped students. New roles for professional educators are discussed with the need to examine values and expectations emphasized. Also noted is the role of instructional and related service personnel in developing individualized programming in functional living skills. Finally, the parent's increasing role as partner in educational programming is considered. (DB)

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A New Future for Children with Substantial Handicaps:

The Second Wave of "Least Restrictive Environment"

Division of Special Education
Indiana Department of Education

and

Developmental Training Center
Indiana University

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NOTICE

This document was produced in partial fulfillment of State Project #85-1-37. The project, commensurate with the initiatives of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, has come to be known as the "Indiana LRE Project." The objectives of this project are: 1.) to develop an awareness of issues related to the education and community integration of persons with substantial handicaps, 2.) to foster state planning and policy development relevant to those issues, 3.) to develop models for public school curriculum, teacher training, and interagency collaboration. This document was produced in response to the first objective and is intended to be an informative, thought provoking tool that will be useful in the planning process. This paper is not a state policy, and should not be construed to be so.

Public meetings are being planned between April 15 and May 15, 1986 in the South Bend, Indianapolis, Vincennes, and New Albany areas for the purpose of gathering public opinion to the issues of least restrictive environments. (Public notice of specific dates, times, and locations is forthcoming.) I urge you to read this carefully and share it freely with those who are involved in the lives of Indiana's community of handicapped persons.

A New Future for Children with Substantial Handicaps: The Second Wave of "Least Restrictive Environment"

Division of Special Education
Indiana Department of Education

and

Developmental Training Center
Indiana University

February 1986

Foreword

Madeleine Will (Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, U.S. Department of Education) suggested that we recognize the tenth year anniversary of P.L. 94-142 by pausing and reflecting on that landmark legislation. More importantly, she reminded us of the immediate need to visualize the future of the "Education of All Handicapped Children Act" and begin to plan for it.

This paper was developed with those thoughts in mind. It is the intent here to not only refresh our memories and understanding of the legal and philosophical bases which undergird the ideal of educating all children in this country, but also to assess what we've learned. As we have worked toward this ideal, many discoveries have been made. We have learned that hard choices have to be made; creative solutions must be developed; the struggle with our values must continue; our methods and even our roles as teachers, parents, and administrators must change. These discoveries point the way to the future. It is our hope that the contributions of our colleagues, which are combined here, will stimulate thinking and foster planning for that future.

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GOALS FOR PERSONS WITH SUBSTANTIAL HANDICAPS

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) has launched a major new initiative that builds on a movement that began over a decade ago with the passage of P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This new federal initiative has been described by Madeleine Will (Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education) as the "second stage of the revolution," and its goal is that "all students, including those with disabilities, have the opportunity to lead productive adults lives and to be integrated in a heterogenous society, independent of undue reliance on others (Will, 1984)." The purpose of this paper is to trace the development of this movement and to project it into the future.

Twenty years ago, advocates in special education and other human services brought pressure to bear to move persons with handicaps out of institutions into more normalized environments (Schreerenberger, 1981; Wolfensberger, 1972). The movement was called "deinstitutionalization". Recent research shows that the deinstitutionalization movement has had major positive effects on the quality of life of persons with handicaps (Bell, Schoenrock, Bensberg, 1981; Edgerton, 1985; Tracy and Guskin, 1980). No longer segregated in larger institutions, children with mild handicaps began attending public schools. The expectations for these children changed as we saw that they could learn, contribute, and live relatively normal lives. The service delivery

system embarked on a period of reorganization as agencies redefined roles, responsibilities, and relationships.

We are now on the brink of another social movement. The movement revolves around the concept of total integration (sometimes referred to as "communitization") of persons with moderate and severe handicaps which implies that these people can live, work, and spend leisure time in community environments. It also involves reorganizing the service delivery system for these persons and building collaborative relationships among agencies. The integration initiative is characterized by:

- promoting a holistic approach to lifetime needs of persons with substantial handicaps;
- providing options and alternatives for persons with substantial handicaps;
- building bridges between school and independent life that include the option for meaningful work;
- focusing on teaching functional life skills that are needed for work and in social interactions;
- redefining what special education will be for persons with substantial handicaps;
- adapting working and living environments to accommodate persons with substantial handicaps; and
- developing collaboration between and among governmental agencies and programs at the local, state, and federal levels.

Going to school is only one part of a child's experience, but no one would dispute its importance in preparing a child for later life. The goal of educational programs for all students, including those with substantial handicaps, is to provide students with the skills and experiences necessary for them to function as independently and as productively

as possible in a variety of vocational, domestic, recreational, and general community environments. For this reason, the public schools have an important role to play in the integration movement (Schrag, 1984).

Changes are already taking place in many states as schools improve occupational preparation of their students beginning in the primary grades. Programming for these young learners with substantial handicaps is moving away from a developmental framework toward a functional model with an emphasis on preparing students for living and working as independently as possible after graduation (Certo, 1983).

A growing number of schools have programs that focus on ways to increase the participation of handicapped students in vocational education. This is being done to aid students in their transition from school to work. Combining vocational and academic programming with the optional provision of work experience represents a shift in policy for many high schools that have traditionally held that students with handicaps must reach a certain level of academic achievement before vocational or career considerations can be addressed (Rusch, 1983).

As a result of this shift, schools are increasing their contacts with other agencies, particularly vocational rehabilitation agencies, and working collaboratively to design creative programs for persons with substantial handicaps. Some programs are placing students with handicaps in

actual jobs in the community or in the school where they receive a salary and/or school credit for their efforts. In the most well-developed programs, work experience (based on a student's skills, behaviors and aptitudes) is part of a continuum of vocational preparation which leads to job placement (Brown, et al., 1984).

These collaborative efforts between schools and other agencies are resulting in the development of inter-agency agreements at both local and state levels. The purpose of many of these agreements is to ensure that students with substantial handicaps do not fall into gaps between services as they make the transition from school to work in the community. Further, legislatures are mandating coordination between agencies. For example in 1985, the Indiana legislature enacted P.L. 28 - 1985 (I.C. 20-1-6-23). The purpose of this new section is to assure coordination and cooperation between and among agencies as children pass from preschool programs, into the schools, and on into adult life and employment. Schools must now identify each handicapped child in the school corporation who is likely to benefit from ongoing adult services after the child's last year of school. If consent is given by the student or the student's parent, the school must transfer the student's special education information to the Indiana Rehabilitation Services Agency for evaluation to determine eligibility for ongoing adult services through either the Indiana Rehabilitation Services Agency or the Department of Mental Health. This new statute is an example of the lifetime planning approach

being taken to meet the needs of persons with substantial handicaps.

If the goal of integration is to be achieved to the maximum extent possible, it must be viewed holistically. Integration is not solely an educational issue, vocational training issue, residential issue, social issue, or employment issue. It is more than the sum of these parts. Achieving integration requires orchestrating transitions from early identification, to early intervention, to integrated school programs, to community jobs, and to community living.

LEGAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS FOR INTEGRATION

The goals and initiatives discussed in the previous section are part of the ongoing movement to ensure that all persons with substantial handicaps are given opportunities to live as freely and as fully as possible. If we want students to live in a heterogeneous society, we must prepare them by first integrating them into the schools. In this sense, each school becomes a microcosm of the community and society where students can live and work as they grow older.

What follows is a summary of the development of the concept of integration in the law. It is included here to provide background information for those who want to review the laws and decisions that have supported the movement toward integration.

Legal Basis for Integration

In the preamble to P.L. 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975), Congress stated the purpose of the act as follows:

> ...to assure that all handicapped children have available to them . . .a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education, and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents are protected, to assist states and localities to provide for the education of all handicapped children and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children.

In order to qualify for federal assistance under this Act, a state must establish (among other requirements):

> procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent, appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private insitutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily... 20 U.S.C. s 1412 (5) (B).

The movement to integrate all children in schools began much earlier. The insight that segregation is inappropriate in education came first in the area of racial segregation. In Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483, 495 (1954), the United States Supreme Court stated in its conclusion:

> We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.

In Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 334 F. Supp. 1257, (E.D. Pa. 1971), the court recognized not only that all handicapped children should have access to public education, but that they should receive their education in regular public schools. The PARC court declared that "placement in a regular public school is preferable to placement in a special public school class and placement in a special public school class is preferable to placement in any other type of program of education and training.", at 1260.

In Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia, 343 F. Supp. 866 (D.D.C. 1972), the court similarly stressed that special education services should be provided "within the context of a presumption that among the alternative programs of education, placement in a regular public school class with appropriate auxilliary services is preferable to placement in a special school class."

Other judicial decisions have strengthened the legal base for integration. In Roncker v. Walter,700 F.2d 1058 (6th Cir. Feb. 23, 1983), the Court concluded that "even in a case where the segregated facility is considered superior, the court should determine whether the services which make that placement superior could be feasibly provided in a non-segregated setting. If they can, the placement in the segregated school would be inappropriate under the Act (P.L. 94-142).", at 1063.

Another major piece of federal legislation that attempts to end segregation of persons with handicapped

conditions is the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112). Section 504 of that Act provides:

> ... no otherwise qualified handicapped individual ... shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

The model for Section 504 was Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the legislative history of Section 504 suggests that, like Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the congressional intent was to end discrimination against persons with handicaps.

The Indiana Constitution provides that the schools shall be "equally open to all," (Art. 8 s 1). And, Indiana's Rule S-1 does require that the case conference committee determine "appropriate placement options which provide the least restrictive environment for the child." 511 I A C 7-1-3(F). "Least restrictive environment" is defined as:

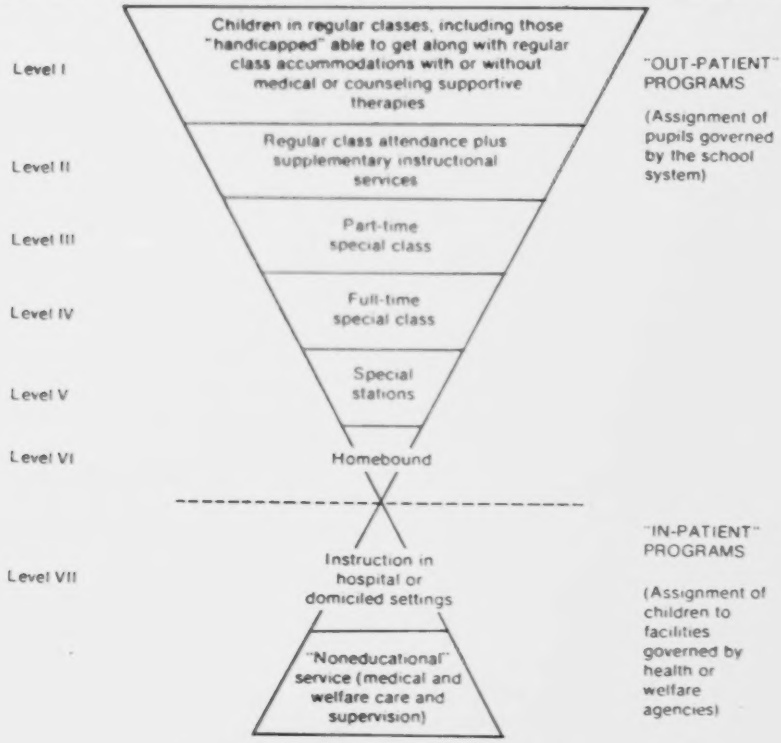
> The educational placement of a handicapped child which is appropriate to meet his/her identified needs and approximates, as closely as possible, the educational placement of the non-handicapped child of comparable age and/or functional ability. 511 I A C 7-1-1 (0).

Evolution of the Concept of Least Restrictive Environment in Schools

The concept of "least restrictive environment" (LRE) has been one of the most important, controversial, and misunderstood terms in special education. It is deceptively simple. Historically, it meant that when the government

intervenes in a person's life, the government must do so in a manner that least intrudes upon or restricts the individual's rights. The concept of LRE developed in this country in relation to civil commitment of persons who were mentally handicapped to residential institutions. The courts ruled that in giving treatment to people within these institutions, the treatment had to be provided in an environment as unrestricted as could be arranged.

In special education, the concept of LRE was adopted and operationalized by providing a continuum of placements for children with handicaps. These placements ranged from the least restrictive to the most restrictive setting and came to be known as the cascade model (Deno, 1970). (See figure below.) While the cascade or continuum concept was


Level I
Children in regular classes, including those "handicapped" able to get along with regular class accommodations with or without medical or counseling supportive therapies
"OUT-PATIENT" PROGRAMS
(Assignment of pupils governed by the school system)
Level II
Regular class attendance plus supplementary instructional services
Level III
Part-time special class
Level IV
Full-time special class
Level V
Special stations
Level VI
Homebound
Level VII
Instruction in hospital or domiciled settings
"Noneducational" service (medical and welfare care and supervision)
"IN-PATIENT" PROGRAMS
(Assignment of children to facilities governed by health or welfare agencies)

Deno's Cascade System of Special Education Service

From: "Special Education as Developmental Capital" by Evelyn Deno, Exceptional Children, 1970, 37 (3), 229-237.

visionary for its time, it has not lead to integration of children with substantial handicaps. Taylor, Bicklen, and Searl (1985) have identified shortcomings of the cascade model:

1. There is a danger that the least restrictive environment is defined as what is available in terms of placement options rather than what is appropriate for a particular child.

2. The term least restrictive environment can be interpreted as presuming that some restriction is necessary rather than starting from a presumption of integration.

3. Too many students get stuck at the wrong end of the continuum. The reality is that some students with learning disabilities and mild mental retardation, as well as those with severe and multiple disabilities, find themselves in totally self-contained programs.

4. There is little movement through the continuum. In other words, once a student is placed in a special school or class, he or she is likely to stay there indefinitely.

5. The "most restrictive" placements do not prepare students for the "least restrictive" placements. Parents of children in institutions and special schools are often told that their children "aren't ready to live in the community or to attend regular schools". The irony in this is that segregated settings do not prepare students with disabilities to function in integrated settings. That is to say, skills necessary to function in integrated environments, whether a public school, a grocery store, or a restaurant,

are different from those that can be taught in a segregated environment. Many students spend their entire lives "getting ready" and then leave school without the skills they need to make it in society.

6. Perhaps the most serious flaw in the continuum concept is the assumption that some students are too handicapped to live and work in society. It is important to keep in mind that the continuum concept was developed at a time when almost 200,000 people lived in public institutions for the mentally retarded and when many school districts routinely excluded students with severe and moderate learning problems, hearing and visual impairments, and emotional difficulties. Consequently, there was little, if any practical experience in educating moderately and severely disabled students in public schools.

Routine exclusion of these students is no longer an acceptable practice. Students with even the most severe disabilities -- severe and profound mental retardation, severe deafness, and multiple handicaps -- are attending regular public schools at an increasing number of locations across the country. A large number of school districts, including Madison, Wisconsin; Tacoma, Washington; and Birmingham, Alabama have closed segregated schools for students with severe and profound handicaps.

Movement to Integration

The shortcomings of the cascade or continuum model have led many educators to move toward the principle of

integration. This change is occuring as states attempt to comply with the mandates of P.L. 94-142 (and its amendments) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Further, school administrators, teachers, and parents are realizing that separate is not equal; students who do not grow up interacting with a wide variety of handicapped and nonhandicapped persons will be different from those who do. The chances are increased that those differences will become deficits that will restrict their life in adulthood (Donder and York, 1984).

The principle of integration means that when a school educates a child who has a handicapping condition, the school should do so in a way that least limits that child's opportunity to be near and interact with other children. Taylor, Bicklen, and Searl (1985) have noted that integration can mean several things:

1. Physical Integration is planning for the location of special programs in school buildings with regular education programs.
2. Social Integration is planning for regular personal interactions between students who have handicaps and those that do not.
3. Academic Integration is planning for how students with and without handicaps can simultaneously use school resources.
4. Societal Integration is planning so students with moderate and severe handicaps can ultimately work, live and spend leisure time with non-handicapped citizens. These

meanings or categories suggest criteria by which we can measure our progress toward achieving integration. The criterion should include, at a minimum:

1. age appropriate placements;
2. neighborhood school placements;
3. normal school days; and,
4. participation in regular school programs.

These changes must occur at the policy making level, but just as importantly, they must occur at the individual level.

Integration should become the guiding principle in the development of goals and objectives, and the placement of each student. The decisions of case conference committees should be guided by the above criteria and be reflected in the individualized educational program (IEP) written for each student.

This section has attempted to review the development of the movement toward integration of students with substantial handicaps in the public schools from legal and human values perspectives. The next section looks into the future toward a new vision of education for students with substantial handicaps.

NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

Education plays an exciting role in the community integration of persons who experience substantial handicaps and now is the time for the educational system to begin to plan

for the future. Warren Bennis (1985), a nationally recognized organizational systems theorist, writes that, "planning is nothing more than a process of making informed judgments about the future and acting on them." There are at least six "informed judgments" that can be made about the future, with regard to the education of moderately and severely handicapped students, which suggest courses of action:

- Special education administrators will play a vital role in initiating changes in the education of moderately and severely handicapped students.
- There will be multiple options for placement of substantially handicapped students which include integrated regular school settings.
- Curriculum for substantially handicapped students will be overhauled and will include community living, working, and social skill development.
- Teacher training (pre-service and in-service) will be geared more toward teaching and managing individualized functional skill development.
- All local providers will develop plans for providing coordinated, across-setting services for persons with substantial handicaps.
- Public schools will be held accountable for providing a functional education for substantially handicapped students.

Special education administrators will play a vital role in initiating changes in the education of students with moderate and severe handicaps. Special education has always been an "innovator" and "inventor" in the field of education. The discipline, within the broader context of education, has made many contributions to the field, for example: 1) blending the expertise of professionals into

interdisciplinary teams for the purpose of meeting the varied needs of individual students, 2) developing individualized education plans for instruction, and, 3) recognizing the merits of smaller pupil/teacher ratios which permit greater teacher/student direct contact. Many of these innovations have drifted into the ranks of regular education as demonstrated by individualized instruction for the gifted, and "Primetime" (smaller pupil/teacher ratios) in the primary grades. Again, special education, as a discipline and as a system, will become the "inventor" of new methods and policies for instruction. Special education administrators will serve as the change agents in LEADING, COMMUNICATING, and SUSTAINING these innovations. In their LEADERSHIP role, special education administrators must be visionaries who build a bridge between the present and the future; that is, they must reassemble all the "pieces" of personnel (professionals and paraprofessionals), curriculum, retraining, and physical locations of programs. But more than managing the logistics of change, they must be COMMUNICATORS who articulate future goals, guide teachers and related professionals toward a unified purpose, and support those personnel through the sometimes frustrating and fearful process of change. The special education administrator must be a SUSTAINER in the presence of resistance to change. The future demands that many transitions be made by those who will prepare and support the more severely handicapped to live, work, and socialize in the community. Those changes will not always come easily. Being

an agent of change is not a new responsibility for these administrators, but perhaps now, more than ever before, the future of special education depends on their leadership.

There will be multiple options for placement of substantially handicapped students which include integrated regular school settings. It is clear that the rights of substantially handicapped students include a "free appropriate public education." It is also evident that the segregation of these students in "handicapped only" facilities has been counterproductive in preparing them for adult life (Certo, 1983; Voeltz, Johnson, and McQuarter, 1983). We know that because of segregation:

- "normalization" is not achieved partially because teachers and other service providers learn to tolerate, ignore, and accept maladaptive behavior since they see no other behavior in comparison;
- non-handicapped persons do not develop awareness and acceptance of handicapped individuals;
- substantially handicapped individuals do not have opportunities to develop social behaviors with non-handicapped peers;
- labeling and ridicule are fostered; and,
- opportunities for meaningful employment are limited because the expectation of integrated competitive employment is not developed.

Students who have been segregated from their non-handicapped peers for the first 18 to 20 years of their lives are simply not prepared for independent living, integrated public employment, or integrated social interaction. In short, the quality of their lives is significantly limited. We know that far more children with handicaps are capable of

succeeding in integrated regular education settings than are placed there. Further, the contention that segregated settings are "better" because of the specialized services they provide has been questioned by the courts as well as educators (Certo, 1983). Services that can be delivered in a segregated setting can be delivered in an integrated school setting, or better yet, in a community setting. The question is no longer, "should we integrate the more severely handicapped into regular schools," but rather, "how can we provide a more integrated educational setting for students with substantial handicaps?" ***NO child should be placed in a segregated facility because that is all that is available. Parents of handicapped children are justifiably demanding the same rights as parents of non-handicapped children -- to have options and alternatives in the placement of their children in educational programs.***

Curriculum for substantially handicapped students will be overhauled and will include community living, working, and social skill development. Until recent times, the curriculum used with students who have moderate and severe handicaps has paralleled the developmental curriculum of instruction used with non-handicapped learners. The evidence suggests that this type of developmental approach is inappropriate for learners with more severe handicaps (Wehman, Kregel, & Barcus, 1985). First, there is no reason to assume that handicapped and non-handicapped learners achieve developmental milestones in similar stages or order. This faulty assumption has led to labels like "delayed," and

"deficient" and has focused attention on inabilities rather than CAPABILITIES. A second problem with teaching methods related to academic skills (like counting change with play money) is that the method is based on the assumption that the learner will generalize the skill to real situations. We know that that generalization does not occur for many handicapped learners. Consequently, if skill development ends with successfully making change with play money, no practical, functional skill has been developed. This realization should lead to drastic changes in our thinking of what kind of curriculum or programming is most useful, in the longterm, to learners with substantial handicaps. Functional curriculum refers to identifying specific performance outcomes, followed by analyzing the functional skills that must be developed in order to achieve those outcomes. Curriculum developers have come to realize that for substantially handicapped learners, much more emphasis is needed on job training, independent living skills, and social skills. The most effective methods of developing those skills are to take the classroom to the real settings: work sites and community facilities (Donnellan and Neel, 1985; Sailor, et al., 1985).

Teacher training (pre-service and in-service) will be geared more toward teaching and managing individualized functional skill development. First, teacher training programs need to be changed to break down barriers between

special and regular education. If students are to be integrated, it follows that teachers themselves must be integrated and trained together to manage these new settings. Second, as the functional curriculum (as opposed to the developmental curriculum) gains popularity, we can anticipate that both new and experienced teachers will need and want training in this particular curriculum. Third, teacher training will focus on preparing teachers to adopt new roles as "teacher coordinators". This means classroom teachers will orchestrate individualized programs which involve vocational educators, vocational rehabilitation specialists and a host of related professionals and paraprofessionals (Wilcox, et al., 1982).

All local providers will develop plans for providing coordinated, across-setting services for persons with substantial handicaps. Models of innovative and exemplary across-agency programs for persons with substantial handicaps are currently being documented and disseminated in the fields of special education, labor, vocational rehabilitation, and mental health. These agreements will serve as models for local agencies as they develop new plans for service delivery which reflect community values. These values applied at this level will touch the individual and have lasting effect.

Public schools will be held accountable for providing a functional education for substantially handicapped students. Accountablility of public institutions, particularly our

schools, has become a major issue in the contemporary political arena. Never before has our citizenry been better informed or better prepared to petition the schools for quality educational programs. This trend will continue. Holding the schools accountable means more than revising reporting procedures. It means that measurable objectives will be established and educational programs will be evaluated based on the extent to which those objectives are met. The function of evaluation is to provide constructive feedback on how better to achieve the goals of preparing substantially handicapped students for independent living. The schools are assuming an important new role in developing a continuum of preparation and support for community living for this special population, and evaluation will improve the quality of that continuum.

These judgments about changing roles, school placements, curriculum, training, and community involvement suggest the areas where ACTION must begin to take place. There is no better place to start taking action than by examining the implications of these judgments.

NEW ROLES FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

If individuals with moderate and severe handicaps are to live, work, and spend leisure time in their home communities, we educators must examine our attitudes, clarify our values, and rethink our roles. Examining one's own attitudes is a very difficult process. What we would LIKE to

feel and what we truly feel, become inextricably intertwined. For example, we would like for people with substantial handicaps to succeed in the community but, do we really believe that that goal is achievable? Our behavior, and especially our words are indicators of our attitudes. Words like "deficient," "remediation," "incapable," are clues to our feelings. Even the phrase, "least restrictive environment" implies some degree of restriction. To embrace the concept of independent living for persons with more severe handicaps, we must begin to think in terms of "capabilities," "aptitudes," and "most desirable environments."

Clarifying our values (what we believe) with regard to persons who experience handicaps, is equally difficult. For ourselves (presumably the non-handicapped), we believe in getting the best possible education, living independently, being gainfully employed, and making all the personal choices that a free society affords us. The values we hold for those with handicaps are far less clear. One needs only to look at some of the arguments that have been made against integrating the more severely handicapped into regular schools to glean underlying values:

1. "It is too costly to provide special services for so few students."

2. "Older school buildings are inaccessible to students with handicaps and there is no money for modification."

3. "Because of shifting enrollments and school closings, there is no room for special classrooms."

4. "Regular school programs are incapable of providing the type of training needed by students with substantial handicaps."

5. "If students with moderate and severe handicaps are integrated with non-handicapped students, they will be subjected to ridicule."

It is evident from this sampling, that the child, him/herself, who has handicaps is neither at the focus of the arguments nor at the base of the values. The first two arguments are economic contentions which ignore options that could be more cost effective than maintaining both a segregated and an integrated school. The third argument is an example of an illogical conclusion drawn from a statement. It does not follow that shifting enrollments or school closings must result in a greater loss of space for the handicapped (compared to the non-handicapped) student. The fourth statement suggests that a student must "fit" a program, rather than the program fitting the student; and,the final statement skirts the issue that sheltering individuals during school will not prevent ridicule or exploitation outside of school. In fact, if integration occurs early, non-handicapped children are more likely to understand and accept their handicapped peers.

The reality is that many people hold one set of values and expectations for non-handicapped children, and another set for children who have handicaps. If arguments like "its too costly," "lack of space," "we aren't prepared to teach your child" were used to exclude non-handicapped children from public educational programs, we would find them unacceptable if not outrageous.

The community integration of substantially handicapped persons is a far reaching social issue; nevertheless, it falls squarely in the domain of the public schools. Like it or not, the schools have always been and will continue to be a vehicle for social change (as was demonstrated by racial and gender school integration). Schools, again, are being called upon to develop creative solutions to old problems and to model innovations for the rest of the community. Educators and other related professionals have a tradition of meeting such challenges. And, we must again rethink and reconstruct our roles toward the goal of preparing the substantially handicapped for integrated, independent community living.

The job of education is to prepare students for life. It has never been more evident that for students with significant handicaps, the educational system is failing to do that. Wehman, Kregel, and Barcus (1985) report that a 1983 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights study found that between 50 and 75% of all disabled people are unemployed. Research in progress across the country reflects similar figures. Even among those who are employed, high levels of underemployment and very poor wages are evident. One can infer that if these percentages apply to all disabled people, the rate of unemployment for the substantially handicapped is exorbitantly high. Employment, to all of us regardless of handicap, means independence, greater self esteem, community involvement and socialization. By not preparing students for employment we are denying them the

quality of life that most of us take for granted. If we can begin now to explore new options for preparing the most critically disabled for meaningful work, we will unquestionably achieve milestones which will benefit the entire community of disabled individuals.

The New Role for Instructional and Related Service Personnel

The "new" teacher will be challenged to create an environment in which INDIVIDUALIZED FUNCTIONAL LIVING SKILLS can be developed. Individualized programming is not a new concept to teachers; however, the objectives which constitute the individual program plan for a learner will be new. Beginning from the premises that the substantially handicapped learner will be integrated with his/her non-handicapped peers; that the student will be competitively employed after school; and, that the student will live in community based housing as an adult, new functional objectives begin to emerge. What does a person need to know, or be able to do, in order to accomplish those ends? At the most basic level, the student needs to know how to be with non-handicapped others. School settings which provide integrated recesses, lunch periods, assemblies, etc., become learning environments for handicapped and non-handicapped alike.

The notion of putting a learner in the environment where he/she must perform is a powerful one. Why simulate a task in a classroom that can be taught in a real environment, with real people, for a real purpose? We can have a

child bring to school a "grocery list" for a loaf of bread and two dollars for the purpose of buying real food, in a real store, with real money. This objective could reinforce following instructions, social skills, and math skills -- functional living skills. The "classroom" in this example is the grocery store. Other "classrooms" may be restaurants, public parks, privately owned businesses, even home. If you want to teach a child to fold towels, teach him to fold towels in a meaningful environment - one where he can even get paid for it.

Where does the teacher fit into this new instructional method? There is yet no simple answer to that question nor a common model to follow. However, it is clear that teachers will spend far more time on assessing the capabilities of learners, developing functional objectives for those learners, designing a new learning environment, and coordinating skill development experiences. It follows that far less time will be spent in traditional classroom settings and more time in community learning environments.

Alternative learning environments will stimulate innovations in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, and other areas. For example, occupational therapy can be provided in a real work setting where the requirements of a task determine the skills which must be developed in order to achieve a measurable, meaningful outcome. Creative ideas like this cannot be dismissed because they have not been tried before or because questions remain

regarding implementation. Progress must not be stalled simply because human nature is to resist change.

The New Role of Parents

It is no mistake that parents are included here under the heading of "Professional Educators." Parents of children with handicaps do not need a graduate degree in education to make good choices about what their child needs and is capable of doing. No one knows a child better than his/her parents, spends more time with a child than his/her parents, or is more highly motivated to support that child in achieving to his/her fullest potential. Yet, parents are perhaps the greatest untapped resource in the educational system. The "new" aspect of the parents' role here refers to how the public school system must incorporate parents as partners in the educational programming for the child. This concept goes beyond including parents in IEP (individualized education plan) meetings. It means that parents will be viewed as "team teachers" in developing and reinforcing the same functional living skills at home that are being learned in the classroom. It also means that parents will be recognized and responded to as the primary advocate and transitional coordinator (e.g. between graduation and community living) for their children.

This new relationship between the schools and parents will bring to light many issues, not the least of which will be a re-examination of the rights of these parents. It was previously stated that many people hold one set of values

for non-handicapped people and a different set for people who have handicaps. The same is true for parents of non-handicapped and handicapped children. Our rhetoric suggests that we value all parents' "rights of choice" regarding their child's education; however, the reality is that most often, parents of children with more severe handicaps have a meaningless choice if only one service option is available. *Child placement based solely on availability of programs is contrary to the intent of the law and more importantly, contrary to our understanding of what an individualized quality education should be for every child.*

New Educators

The fresh emphasis on vocational training for the more severely handicapped has lead to the growing use of inter-disciplinary personnel who serve as links between academic and vocational programs. These individuals are becoming known as "Vocational Resource Educators," "Vocational Student Tutors," "Student Services Coordinators," "Job Coaches," and "Work-Study Coordinators." A recent government sponsored study (conducted by Harold Russell Associates, 1984) reported that these staff members are performing a number of critical functions:

- o developing vocational objectives for IEPs
- o providing information to vocational education instructors on the special needs of their students
- o providing additional assistance to handicapped students during vocational classes

- o modifying the curriculum where necessary
- o working with special education teachers to insure that vocational and academic programming are integrated.

Other professional and paraprofessional roles will be defined over time which will strengthen the interdisciplinary process of meeting the needs of moderately and severely handicapped learners.

CONCLUSION

Futures analyst, John Naisbitt (1985), begins his recent book by stating, "if you want to change the world, there is no time like the present...in the mid-1980s, that advice is taking on new meaning...We are re-inventing education, health care, politics, and virtually all our social structures." These seemingly simple but keen observations capsulize what is happening in the handicapped individual's world. Changes are being made at an increasing rate, and there are many more to come. We are moving away from segregated isolated schools for those with handicaps and toward community integrated education. We are beginning to discover that a presumption of capabilities in concert with functional skills leads to achievements never before thought possible. But perhaps the most exciting change is that after ten years, we have come to realize that the "least restrictive environment" is where WE live, work, and play - in the community - and what began as an ideal for those with handicaps can become the reality. All we have to do is re-invent the ways to make it happen.

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